

Standard USG-3: The student will demonstrate an understanding of the continuing role of the United States Constitution in the defining and shaping of American government and society.

USG-3.4 Summarize the process through which public policy is formed in the United States, including setting a public agenda and the role of political institutions, political parties, and special interest groups. (P)

Taxonomy Level: 2.4-B Understand Conceptual Knowledge

Previous/future knowledge:

There will have been no previous knowledge of this indicator. Students will have had brief exposure to the development of political parties in America and a brief introduction to some important third party ideas in U.S. history.

It is essential for students to know that public policy seeks to create a plan(s) of action to answer the political questions associated with governance and administration. Since public policy deals with issues related to the public sphere, students need to recognize the broadness of these issues and the myriad of influences in setting policy. They need to know at its core that public policy contends with the questions of who governs, who makes public decisions, how resources are distributed, and the funding of public enterprises. Students need to be able to describe how political parties influence the setting of agendas and how those who create/implement policy are often “responsible” to political parties. They also should be able to detail the purpose of special interest groups and the operation of these groups as they seek to exert influence on policy. Students need to understand the role of political institutions in setting policy, especially where these institutions have enumerated functions. Finally there should be an emphasis on the interaction of these groups, institutions, and the populace in setting public policy.

It is not essential for students to know any specific interest groups per se. Case studies will be beneficial in increasing understanding, but which groups are to be utilized are left to the discretion of the teacher.

Assessment guidelines: The objective of this indicator is to summarize the process by which public policy is formed. Appropriate assessment would require students to include information detailing the role of political institutions, political parties, and special interest groups in formulating public policy. It would be appropriate to include assessment focusing on the analysis of specific public policy and determining how that policy was decided.